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Exploring the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the foundation phase: a case study of a Grade 3 South African teacher

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Abstract

While the ICT in Education policy and the White Paper on e-Education recommends the use of digital technology to enhance the delivery of the curriculum, clear guidance on how to implement this in classrooms still needs to be articulated. This guidance should begin with Foundation Phase (Grade R-3) teachers if the impact of ICTs in our education system is to be realised as learners will be exposed to them at an early age. Hitherto, most of the documented interventions have focused on higher grades; therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand how best to integrate ICTs in the teaching of the Foundation Phase in a way that promotes the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. This was a qualitative case study that involved a Foundation Phase teacher in a school located in South Africa in the Gauteng province.

Data was generated through interviews and classroom observations of three lessons and analysed using an analytical framework adopted from Ndlovu to categorise and describe ICTs used, their affordances, and pedagogical value. The study used constructivism as the theoretical framework whose main tenet is learner-centred teaching and learning, wherein the learners are allowed to construct knowledge and meaning.

The main research finding was that the teacher who was observed and interviewed uses ICTs and has a thorough understanding of the different media forms and their affordances. The teacher integrates ICTs in teaching and learning to improve all aspects of learning and has become adept at using ICTs due to the training attended as part of continuous professional development. Out of the five media forms four were used which are interactive, communicative, adaptive, and narrative. The productive media forms were not used since it was mainly the teacher who used the ICTs, yet the productive media forms should be used mainly by the learners. The school is also well resourced. The findings indicate that when ICTs are used during learning, Foundation Phase learners become more active and understand concepts taught because learning is centred around them, and they take charge of their learning in the learning process.

Keywords: ICT pedagogical integration; enhancement of teaching; Foundation Phase; media forms